

WE CLAIM:

1. A method for accessing instructions on a device having a user interface, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a user-selection of a first help mode displayed on the user interface, the selected first help mode allowing the user to choose an icon for identification of a function associated with the icon without invoking the function;

upon receiving a user-selection of the icon, displaying a help window including an identification of a function associated with the icon and a link to instructions related to accomplishing the function; and

in response to user-selection of the link, displaying the instructions related to accomplishing the function.

2. The method of claim 1, which further comprises returning to the first help mode on the user interface after displaying the instructions,

receiving a next selection of a different icon

displaying a different help window including an identification of a next function associated with the different icon and a next link to instructions related to accomplishing the next function; and

in response to user-selection of the next link, displaying instructions related to accomplishing the next function.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the identification of a function associated with the icon includes a description of the function.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the instructions related to accomplishing the function include a series of steps a user executes to accomplish a task associated with the function.

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5. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

receiving a user-selection of a second help mode displayed on the interface, the second help mode presenting a user with a list of help topics;

receiving a user-selection for a help topic from the list; and

10 displaying instructions for accomplishing a function related to the user-selected help topic.

6. A device configured to perform one or more user-selectable
15 functions, the device comprising:

a processor configured to nominally effect a function upon receiving a command associated with the function; and

a user interface including a plurality of selectable icons, selection of each icon nominally effecting transmission of a corresponding command to the processor, the user interface further including a help menu having a user-selectable first help mode which provides for subsequent selection of icons without transmission of the corresponding command to the processor, and a help window presented upon selection of an icon after selection of the first help mode, the help window including an identification of a function associated with
20 the selected icon and a link to command instructions related to the function associated with the selected icon, selection of the link effecting communication of the instructions.

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7. The device of claim 6, further comprising a user-selectable second help mode, which upon selection, presents the user with a list of help topics from which the user selects a topic, wherein upon selection of a topic a set of instructions associated with the selected topic is displayed.

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8. The device of claim 7, wherein the user interface includes a touch screen, which accommodates user-selection of the help menu and subsequently user-selection of either of the first help mode and the second help mode.

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9. The device of claim 8, wherein the device is a copier.

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10. The device of claim 8, wherein the device is a printer.

11. The device of claim 8, wherein the device is a fax machine.

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12. The device of claim 8, wherein the device is a digital sender.

13. The device of claim 8, wherein the device is a multi-function peripheral

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14. A computer-implemented user interface comprising:

plural icons, each nominally selectable to invoke a function associated with the icon;

5 a help menu including a first help mode selectable to provide for subsequent selection of one of the icons without invoking the function associated with the selected icon;

a help window presented upon selection of the first help mode and subsequent selection of the selected icon, the help window including an identification of the function associated with the selected icon and a link to
10 command instructions related to the function associated with the selected icon; and

command instructions presented upon selection of the link.

15 15. The interface of claim 14, wherein the help menu includes a second help mode configured to presents a list of selectable help topics, which upon selection of one of the help topics presents instructions related to the selected topic.

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16. The interface of claim 15, wherein interface is configured to operate a printer.

25 17. The interface of claim 15, wherein the interface is configured to operate a copier.

18. The interface of claim 15, wherein the interface is configured to operate a fax machine.

5 19. The interface of claim 15, wherein the interface is configured to operate a digital sender.

20. The interface of claim 15, wherein the interface is configured to
10 operate a multi-function peripheral.

21. A program storage device readable by a processor, tangibly
embodying a program of instructions executable by the processor to perform
15 method steps for accessing instructions on a device having a user interface, the
method steps comprising::

receiving a user-selection of a first help mode displayed on the user
interface, the selected first help mode allowing the user to choose an icon for
identification of a function associated with the icon without invoking the
20 function;

upon receiving a user-selection of the icon, displaying a help window
including an identification of a function associated with the icon and a link to
instructions related to accomplishing the function; and

in response to user-selection of the link, displaying the instructions
25 related to accomplishing the function.

22. The program storage device of claim 21, wherein the method further comprises:

returning to the first help mode on the user interface after displaying the instructions,

5 receiving a next selection of a different icon

displaying a different help window including an identification of a next function associated with the different icon and a next link to instructions related to accomplishing the next function; and

10 in response to user-selection of the next link, displaying instructions related to accomplishing the next function.

23. The program storage device of claim 21, wherein the method further comprises:

15 receiving a user-selection of a second help mode displayed on the interface, the second help mode presenting a user with a list of help topics;

receiving a user-selection for a help topic from the list; and

displaying instructions for accomplishing a function related to the user-selected help topic.

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